

REMARKS

This paper is presented in response to the non-final official action dated December 10, 2008, wherein (a) claims 1-8 were pending, (b) claims 1-3, 5, and 8 were rejected as anticipated by Kepplinger et al US 5,584,910 ("Kepplinger"), (c) claim 4 was rejected as obvious over Kepplinger in view of JP 61-288004 ("JP '004"), (d) claim 6 was rejected as obvious over Kepplinger in view of Brusov et al US 3,876,419 ("Brusov"), and (e) claim 7 was rejected as obvious over Kepplinger in view of Kanetsuna et al 5,229,064 ("Kanetsuna").

Claim 1 has been amended to more distinctly claim the invention, without adding new matter. Support is found, for example, in Fig. 1 and the description beginning at page 8. line 4.

Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is solicited.

The rejections, all of which are based on Kepplinger, are respectfully traversed.

Firstly, the invention of the amended claims differs from the Kepplinger in that the method of Kepplinger does not use only a portion of the exhaust gas, while the invention uses less than all of the exhaust gas for drying and conveying the mixture.

Secondly, Kepplinger does not disclose an element corresponding to the conveying line of the present invention.

The action suggests that a passage (col. 5, lines 42-54) of Kepplinger teaches this limitation. To the contrary, Fig. 1 of Kepplinger shows that all of the exhaust gas – not merely a portion thereof – is used to heat the reducing gas. Fig. 1 shows that fines exit the bottom of the reduction cyclone (separator) 31 – no exhaust gas exits the bottom of the separator 31. These fines are combined with other fines in the process and reintroduced into the system with a conveying gas (nitrogen) at an injection point 33 (bottom right corner of Fig. 1). If any exhaust gas were present with the fines (in line 32, for example), the injection gas would likely be unnecessary because the exhaust gas pressure would be sufficient to convey the fines.

Thirdly, in the present invention, only a portion of the exhaust gas is supplied to a conveying line and the mixture, which is also supplied to the conveying line, is

started to be conveyed by the portion of the exhaust gas in the same direction as the portion of the exhaust gas of the invention.

Therefore, a starting direction of the mixture to start conveying in the conveying line is substantially the same as a supplying direction of the branched offgas to the conveying line.

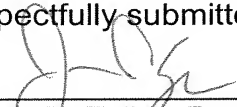
To the contrary, according the reference, since the exhaust gas supplying line and an iron conveying line are connected to each other along a direction to be different from each other at opposite sides of a reactor for preheating, the starting direction of the materials to start conveying in the conveying line is different from the supplying direction of the reducing gas to the conveying line.

Therefore, it is submitted that the amended claims patentably distinguish from the applied art, and that all claims 1-8 are of proper scope and form for allowance. Such action is solicited.

Should the examiner wish to discuss the foregoing or any matter of form in an effort to advance this application toward allowance, she is urged to telephone the undersigned at the indicated number.

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Respectfully submitted,

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